# Department of Tourism



2003-05
Biennial Report

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Jim Doyle, Governor Jim Holperin, Secretary

October 15, 2005

The Honorable Jim Doyle 115 East, State Capitol Madison, WI 53707

## Dear Governor Doyle:

In accordance with WI Stat. 15.04 (1) (d), the Department of Tourism is submitting our 2003-2005 Biennial Report. We have highlighted our accomplishments from the past biennium and discussed some new initiatives for the future.

Tourism has continued to be a proven economic engine for the State of Wisconsin. During the 2003-05 biennium, travelers spent over \$23.5 billion in our great State. As you know, these expenditures, in turn, have helped state and local governments pay for many services and traditions that our citizens value.

The travel and hospitality industry acknowledges the difficult fiscal times being faced by state government. The state's circumstances make the industry appreciate, even more, your understanding of the value that tourism marketing provides. You have demonstrated your continued commitment to our industry by the 21% increase in promotional dollars you have allotted to the Department in the upcoming biennium. Thank you!

The Department of Tourism and the travel industry look forward to continuing to showcase the beautiful state we know and love. We look forward to continued success as a premier Midwest destination where "*Life's So Good*."

Sincerely,

Jim Holperin Secretary

Travelers spend \$12 billion in Wisconsin every year.

#### **Function & Structure**

The Department of Tourism's mission is to promote the State of Wisconsin as a premier Midwest destination. We encourage people to travel to and within our great state. We use a variety of methods to reach people including: advertising (television, radio, magazine, newspaper, internet, etc.), public relations, information resources (welcome centers, trade shows, publications, Web site, direct mail, etc.), and partnerships with communities and a variety of local groups.

The Department is a cabinet-level agency with both the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary appointed by the Governor. We have four Bureau Managers who report directly to the Secretary's Office. Managers supervise and direct staff and the day-to-day operations of their areas. An organizational chart can be found on page 5.

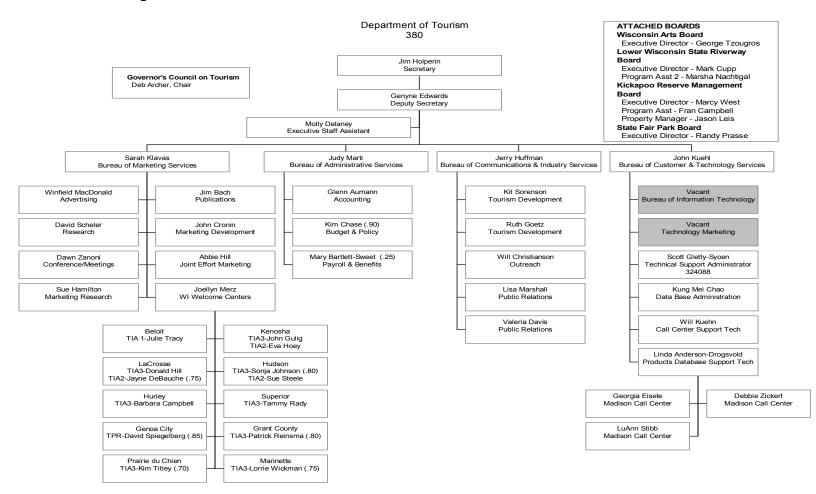
The Governor's Council on Tourism advises the Secretary by providing strategic direction. Members of the Council have experience in marketing and promotion strategy and represent all geographic areas of Wisconsin. Current members of the Council can be found on page 6.

#### **Alternative Work Patterns**

The Department of Tourism's regular business hours are 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Department does, however, allow employees to work flex-time to balance their personal and professional lives as long as the operational and customer service needs of the Department are satisfied. Flex-time has allowed the Department to retain dedicated staff while continuing to meet workload demands.

Further, to accomplish the staff reductions required by 2003 Act 33, several staff voluntarily reduced their full-time equivalent (FTE) status. This action allowed the employees flexibility and helped the Department to avoid more layoffs.

## **Organizational Chart**



#### **Governor's Council on Tourism**

The Governor's Council on Tourism advises the Department and is made up of 17 representatives of Wisconsin's tourism industry and four members of the Wisconsin State Legislature. The Council provides tourism representatives with an interest and expertise in specific areas of tourism development and marketing an opportunity to help shape the direction of the Department's programs.

#### The members include:

- Linda Adler, Executive Director of the Chippewa Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, Eau Claire
- Deb Archer, Chair; President & CEO of the Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau, Madison
- Roger Breske, Senator of the 12<sup>th</sup> Senate District, Eland
- Ellsworth Brown, Director of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison
- Gloria Cobb, Deputy Director of the Great Lakes Intertribal Council, Inc., Lac du Flambeau
- Christina Danforth, Gaming Commissioner of the Oneida Nation, Oneida
- Jim Holperin, Secretary of the Department of Tourism, Madison
- David Holtze, General Manager of the Forest Hills Golf Course, Restaurant & Banquet Facility, La Crosse
- Doug Neilson, President & CEO of Visit Milwaukee, Milwaukee
- David Olsen, Member of the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, Jefferson
- Mark Pettis, Representative of the 28<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, Hertel
- Karen Raymore, Executive Director of the Door County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau, Sturgeon Bay
- Lola Roeh, General Manager of the Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake
- William Slater, Owner of Millie's Pancake House, Delavan
- Romy Snyder, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau, Wisconsin Dells
- John Steinbrink, Representative of the 65<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, Pleasant Prairie
- Patricia Thornton, Director of Bayfield County Tourism & Recreation, Washburn
- George Tzougros, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Arts Board, Madison
- Kari Zambon, Owner/Operator of Holiday Acres Resort, Rhinelander
- David Zien, Senator of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District, Eau Claire

## **Bureau of Marketing**

The Bureau of Marketing directs the Department's seasonal and multi-cultural advertising campaigns. In addition, the Bureau designs and produces all Department publications, administers the Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grant program, coordinates the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, coordinates numerous co-op advertising and direct marketing opportunities, directs an extensive program of ongoing research, coordinates and offers direct marketing leads to the tourism industry and promotes Wisconsin as a group and international travel destination. Further, the Bureau administers two advertising agency contracts and stewards the state's tourism brand. Through the integrated work of both advertising agencies and all of the related promotional program areas, the Bureau of Marketing extends the invitation to travel to Wisconsin and enjoy a wide range of events, activities and destinations.

- Advertising: The Department of Tourism, under the guidance of the Department of Administration's Procurement Division, released a Request For Proposal for advertising services in January 2004. Ten advertising agencies responded to the request. After a thorough and comprehensive review process using travel industry as well as staff evaluators, the advertising contract was awarded to Boelter + Lincoln with offices in Milwaukee and Madison. The first challenge facing the agency was to prepare a new research-based campaign complete with a tourism slogan supporting the Wisconsin brand. After a process that started with extensive focus group testing, "Wisconsin, Life's So Good" was adopted. An integrated three season campaign (spring/summer, fall and winter) utilizing appropriate visual images and music was launched in February 2005 and presented to the Wisconsin tourism industry at the Governor's Conference on Tourism in March of 2005.
- Industry Partnerships: During the biennium, the Department fostered a variety of industry partnerships to leverage promotional dollars and maximize market penetration. With the roll-out of the new "Wisconsin, Life's So Good" slogan, the Department advanced an initiative to extend campaign awareness into the local hospitality industry by creating a mini-grant program. Through this program, \$1,000 promotional partnership awards were made to destinations and nonprofit tourism organizations that developed creative ways to use local media and alternative communication channels to extend awareness of the new brand. 37 awards were made to support a wide range of projects.
- Large Scale Event Marketing: Many large-scale events chose to locate in Wisconsin throughout the 2003-05 biennium. The Department of Tourism was proactive in utilizing these events as a promotional springboard for national and international exposure. A marketing devise, titled the "Big Six," provided multi-channeled promotional opportunities to promote this state.

The "Big Six" events were: the PGA Championship at Whistling Straits, ESPN's Great Outdoors Games, Year of Wisconsin's Forests, the Treasures of Ancient Egypt exhibit at the Milwaukee Public Museum, The Grand Excursion and the opening of a renovated Lambeau Field.

- **JEM/Destination Marketing Grants:** During the biennium, the Department awarded \$2,350,199 in Joint Effort Marketing Grants to nonprofit tourism organizations for 100 different projects. Through constant program enhancements along with a dedicated staff and industry appointed review team, the JEM program continues to be one of the most popular offerings of the Department.
- Publications & Graphic Design: The Department produces nearly 1 million Wisconsin travel publications annually featuring six major titles and several "samplers" or niche publications. Through an internal work-group, new ideas and alternative strategies were discussed to insure that Wisconsin publications remain among the best in the nation. Several intrastate agency publications were developed including Rustic Roads, in partnership with the Department of Transportation, and a new publication promoting birding, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources. The birding initiative is planned to be a 5 year program with maps and guides for the entire state.
- Consumer Shows: The Department showcased Wisconsin to over 5.1 million potential customers at multiple consumer, travel, and sport shows located in the state's primary and secondary target markets. The shows continue to provide a unique one-on-one marketing opportunity to reach customers who may not get Wisconsin travel information from any other source. A new cooperative opportunity was created for the hospitality industry so they can participate in selected shows most conducive to advancing their own marketing plans. Industry partners who couldn't justify participation at an entire show are now able to partner in the Department's booth for a day, weekend, or other combination of time suitable to their resources. The show itinerary is evaluated each year to ensure that only the best shows with the most opportunity to deliver the right audience are included in the consumer show schedule.
- Meetings and Conventions: The Department continued to focus on the meetings and conventions market by partnering with the private sector to produce the *Think Wisconsin* guide and Web site. Additional marketing efforts included development of "Meet Wisconsin," an industry-based initiative to advance the strategy of reminding Wisconsin businesses to plan and hold meetings and conventions at home. The *Think Wisconsin* campaign is designed to position Wisconsin as an excellent destination for group meetings and conventions of any size.

- Multi-cultural markets: There was a continued commitment to inviting multi-cultural audiences to travel in Wisconsin. Key elements of the campaign included advertising aimed at African-American and Hispanic markets. Several industry-supported promotions aimed at multi-cultural travelers utilizing key media partners in Milwaukee and Chicago resulted in over \$90,000 worth of media value. A multi-cultural calendar was developed utilizing travel themes, events and specific visual images and distributed to affinity groups and business leaders to enhance and generate talk-value among recognized leaders. The Department, again, employed the services of certified minority advertising and public relations agency, Creative Marketing Resources.
- Research: The Department of Tourism is committed to making research-based marketing decisions and does so by conducting a variety of qualitative and quantitative research studies. Over the biennium, a comprehensive series of seasonal market studies identified customer-preferred activities, attitudes, expenditures and travel party composition. Further, seasonal advertising awareness, a variety of focus group studies and an industry cooperative research program continued to feed data and information into marketing planning and program development.
- Governor's Conference on Tourism: The Department hosted its annual statewide tourism conference in Green Bay (2004) and Madison (2005). Both continued the Wisconsin tradition of exceptional attendance, content and quality. The conference is the largest of its kind in the nation, and a model for other state tourism offices. Attendees continued to learn about industry advances and uses of technology, customer service, public relations and marketing.
- International Marketing: The Department continued partnerships with the Great Lakes of North America and the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, regional marketing organizations that promote Wisconsin and nearby states to markets in Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. With the Travel Industry of America placing an increased emphasis on cultivating international travel, and the tourism industry showing a readiness to dedicate staff and financial resources, the Department is putting additional work towards recharging this market.
- Film Office: Selling Wisconsin its talent, resources and image as a location for filmmaking, corporate/industrial videos, commercials, television shows, and still photography those were the roles of the Film Office. The Film Office also facilitated the production of feature film projects in Wisconsin and supported the "Wisconsin's Own" portion of the annual Wisconsin Film Festival, the Children's International Film Festival, the Milwaukee International Film Festival and the Black Point Film Festival. The Film Office closed at the end of the biennium as a result of the Department's decision to place a higher

priority on other marketing strategies which deliver a better return on investment.

During the next biennium, the Marketing Bureau will continue to widely distribute its invitation to travel in Wisconsin to a core Midwest audience and a secondary national audience through highly targeted integrated strategies. The Bureau will continue to assist communities through the JEM program, host the annual Governor's tourism conference in Wisconsin Dells at the Ho-Chunk Convention Center (2006) and in Appleton at the Paper Valley Convention Center (2007), and leverage partnerships with the Wisconsin hospitality industry to create greater exposure of the state as a travel destination. The number of consumer shows the Department attends will also increase during the biennium, and the new Ready, Set, Go! grant program will help nonprofit organizations with up-front fees to bring sporting and other competitive events to Wisconsin.

## **Bureau of Communications and Industry Services**

The Bureau of Communications and Industry Services is comprised of the Department's two tourism development specialists and three public relations staff.

The Department's development specialists travel the state to work with communities and the tourism industry. They provide a variety of services including community assessments, consultation for marketing and infrastructure development, promotion of new Department programs and services, and assistance with Joint Effort Marketing and other grant applications.

The Tourism Development Specialists are a vital communication link, providing a first point of contact with the Department for the travel and hospitality industry.

In FY 04 and 05, the Communications staff generated more than \$34 million of equivalent advertising value in local, national, and international media, reaching approximately 581 million people. Here are some of the highlights:

- Golf Wisconsin was developed in conjunction with the Department's support provided to the 2004 PGA Championship at Whistling Straits. The Golf Wisconsin initiative included Golf Wisconsin Day and several Golf Wisconsin clinics. In the first two years of Golf Wisconsin Day, more than 150 golf courses let 15,000 kids play for free or at a discount. In addition, nearly 200 ladies and young women took part in three Golf Wisconsin clinics in 2005.
- The Life's So Good campaign was launched with a press conference led by Governor Doyle. The event attracted statewide publicity for the new slogan and campaign.
- Promoting 2004's "Big Six" events (PGA, Grand Excursion, Quest for Immortality exhibit, Great Outdoor Games, Lambeau Field, and Year of Wisconsin Forestry) helped attract national and regional media attention for all the events.
- The "Where In Wisconsin Is Jessica Doyle?" game, a partnership with Wisconsin's First Lady, wrapped up its second year (2004-2005) with a record 25,000 entries and was carried by 36 Wisconsin newspapers. Even more media outlets reported on the First Lady's school visits to the weekly winners.
- The Department partnered with the Madison and Milwaukee CVBs to assist with the Outdoor Writers Association of America and Society of American Travel Writers annual conferences. Both events led to substantial news stories about Wisconsin in papers including the Chicago

Tribune, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and many others. Other longer-lead magazine articles are expected over the next two years including Sierra Magazine.

- Partnership with the Wisconsin DNR and local communities in a five-year project to promote the Great Wisconsin Birding Trail.
- Multicultural publicity efforts resulted in a substantial number of earned media interviews for Deputy Secretary Genyne Edwards.
- Television exposure included regular local coverage from Wisconsin news programs, regional stations such as WLS-TV in Chicago and national programming that included Food Network, Outdoor Life Network, ESPN2, Golf Channel, Travel Channel, NBC Today Show and CBS Sunday Morning.
- Significant print media placements included GolfWeek, AAA Home & Away, Midwest Living, New York Times, Washington Post, New York Post, New York Daily News, USA Today, National Geographic Traveler, FamilyFun Magazine, Travel America, Family Circle, Boating World, Bon Appetit, Trailer Life and Motorhome.
- Web site media included regular exposure in the travel sections of msnbc.com, jsonline.com, chicagotribune.com, startribune.com, cnn.com and si.com (Sports Illustrated).
- Across Wisconsin, weekly "best bets" for entertainment or travel were broadcast on more than 70 radio stations including Journal Radio Network.

In the next biennium, the Development Specialists will continue to raise awareness of the Department's programs and services and to serve as liaisons between the tourism industry and Department. The Communications team will be putting an increased emphasis on reaching national travel publications and television shows/networks, including online travel sites. They will be improving outreach to the tourism industry and education efforts by presenting media and public relations educational workshops throughout the state. An increased emphasis will be placed on promoting Wisconsin's arts/cultural/heritage offerings as well as Wisconsin's ecotourism opportunities and destinations. Expanding promotional opportunities will be important. The Bureau will enhance the level of support and interaction the Department gives to media visitors before, during and after their trips to the state. Finally, the Bureau will continue to incorporate Spanish language translation with multicultural PR outreach opportunities.

## **Bureau of Customer & Technology Services**

The Bureau of Customer and Technology Services is responsible for meeting the information needs of the traveling public and for performing computer network support, Internet, and database management for the Department. The Bureau oversees the Department's Extranet, which allows tourism organizations across the state to use an online system to enter travel items (attractions, events, etc.) that can then be accessed for Department publications, for viewing on travelwisconsin.com, and for planning a trip through the customer call center.

**Web Site Usage:** During the past biennium, the Department saw 6.1 million user sessions on travelwisconsin.com. Tourism staff and industry partners have continued their loyal use of the Extranet system, making additions and edits online to over 16,000 current travel items in the tourism database. These attractions, hotels, events and restaurants are all searchable on travelwisconsin.com and also appear in our printed and online publications.

**Web Site Updates:** While travelwisconsin.com was not in need of a major redesign in this biennium, the site has seen some design and content enhancements with the Department's "Wisconsin, Life's So Good" marketing theme. Content developments include permanent features on harbor towns, national treasures, birding, and biking. A special Golf Wisconsin web site, which helped the state promote golf vacations at a time when the PGA Championship was at Whistling Straits in Kohler, WI, has drawn worldwide attention. The Department has also created electronic versions of all in-house produced publications, which have been viewed by over 40,000 customers.

**Other Sites:** In addition to travelwisconsin.com, the site intended to provide travel information to visitors, the Bureau also directs the maintenance of the Department's business-oriented site. This site is an online resource for travel and hospitality businesses looking for information on programs and resources offered by the Department. The web site for the Wisconsin Film Office remains online for archival purposes, but is no longer updated by Department staff.

**Marketing Communications:** The number of subscribers that regularly receive travel information from the Department via e-mail increased to over 300,000 this biennium – a 300% surge since June 2003. Nearly 2 million e-mails will be sent in the coming fiscal year, all in accordance with best practices for permission marketing.

**Wisconsin.gov:** A link to the portal continues to be featured on all of the Department's Web site pages. The portal continues to be a top 10 referring site to travelwisconsin.com.

**Requests for Travel Information:** During the 2003-2005 biennium, the Bureau managed nearly 300,000 requests for information via inbound telemarketing,

mail, e-mail, and Web publication orders. In addition, the Bureau distributed more than 4 million publications to travelers, consumer show attendees, and tourism industry partners.

**Call Centers:** The Bureau purchased a web-based browser application for the Department's call center. The application is backed by the Department's product database and provides operators the ability to create custom trip plans for customers. These trip plans can be delivered verbally to the customer, e-mailed, or printed and mailed.

**Fulfillment:** Research conducted annually continues to prove that Wisconsin's Department of Tourism publications reach customers by mail more quickly than almost any other state. During the biennium, the Department sent out more than 360,000 travel packets.

**Warehouse:** The Department continues to manage two warehousing operations for distribution of publications to Wisconsin Welcome Centers, consumer shows, travelers and industry partners. One warehouse is in LaCrosse (Riverfront, Inc., a sheltered workshop) and the other is in Madison (a partnership with the University of Wisconsin). Publications and inquiries can go through travelwisconsin.com or through the call center.

Moving forward, we will continue to emphasize the development of original content for travelwisconsin.com and its e-mail newsletters as a primary means to sell travelers on Wisconsin getaways. We will also continue enhancing our technology marketing. Further, the Department intends to diversify the programs and services offered to industry partners as a way to improve online marketing presence at the destination level.

#### Wisconsin Welcome Centers

Ten Wisconsin Welcome Centers are located at entry points to the state on major highways. Prior to August 2005, the centers were called Wisconsin Travel Information Centers. In changing the centers' focus to be more marketing/promotional, we also changed their name.

## **Highlights from the biennium:**

- Nearly 2.2 million travelers and 74,000 motorcoach passengers were served by the state's 10 Wisconsin Welcome Centers during the 2003-2005 biennium.
- A Wisconsin Welcome Center Planning Committee was formed in response to the Department of Transportation's announcement to close rest areas, including those that house the Genoa City and Hudson Welcome Centers. Although the issue was resolved with Governor Doyle directing that the Welcome Centers remain open, the committee continues to meet to develop a long-range plan for the Centers.
- In response to the Welcome Center Planning Committee's work, the Welcome Center managers participated in a Long Term Strategic Planning process to develop a plan to enhance the level of service provided at the centers and better integrate Welcome Center operations into the Department of Tourism marketing strategies.
- The Welcome Center in Marinette was temporarily closed for the 2005 season due to highway construction limiting access to the Center.
   Arrangements were made with the Marinette Chamber of Commerce to provide state travel information to visitors for the 2005 season.
- The Wisconsin Welcome Center program was moved from the Bureau of Customer and Technology Services to the Bureau of Marketing.
- Increased efforts to offer promotions, ranging from the distribution of the Department's fish poster to drawings for State Fair family fun packs, drew visitors to the Welcome Centers and provided opportunities for tourism industry partners to enhance customers' experience when visiting the Centers.
- Continued close working relationships and partnerships with the Department of Transportation and Rehabilitation For Wisconsin, which have allowed for higher efficiencies and greater services at our Welcome Centers.

During the coming biennium, we will implement a new marketing strategy to encourage travelers to use the Wisconsin Welcome Centers. We will offer special Welcome Center promotions to increase and enhance customer visits to centers. We will explore ways to continue integrating Welcome Center operations into the Department of Tourism marketing strategies and other current programs.

#### **Bureau of Administrative Services**

The Bureau of Administrative Services administers agency policies, procedures, systems and services for departmental operations. The Bureau manages the agency's human resources, accounting, purchasing, payroll and benefits, along with budget and policy. The Bureau accomplished the following goals during the last biennium:

- Provided research and advice in preparing a Memorandum Of Understanding for attorney services with the Dept. of Commerce.
- Provided guidance and assistance in the closure of the Travel Information Center in Madison and relocating staff and limited operations to the Department's main office.
- Assisted in securing a new tenant for the vacant space created by the closure of the Travel Information Center in Madison.
- Guided and assisted the RFP process for securing advertising and public relations services.
- Closely monitored the Department's budget and reduced expenditures to comply with recent budget cuts.
- Assisted managers in tracking their individual bureau budgets.
- Continued to work with attached boards to advise and assist them in administrative processes.
- Cross-trained staff in purchasing duties and a variety of WiSMART functions.
- Actively participated in organizing a legislative event held in coordination with the 2005 Governor's Conference on Tourism in Madison.
- Pro-actively facilitated retiring and laid off employees to provide options in state employment, retirement, retraining or Employee Referral resources.
- Transitioned Department functions from eliminated positions to other staff or alternatives.
- Provided organizational planning support to include updating position descriptions and planning for new internal processes.
- Provided advice and support in the reduction of State Fair Park positions.
- Planned and implemented the Payroll, Time and Attendance system for Tourism including remote Welcome Centers, Arts Board, Lower Wisconsin Riverway Board and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.
- Negotiated TIA 1 & 2 pay range reassignments.
- Received the Governor's Special Minority Business Award for fiscal year 2004 by purchasing 6.16% of goods and services from certified minority vendors.
- Continued to focus on Affirmative Action, multicultural marketing and diversity outreach efforts.

Over the next biennium, the Bureau of Administrative Services will be reduced to 1.65 FTE positions as the enterprise initiatives from 2005 Act 25 are

implemented. This, therefore, will mean greater partnerships with the Department of Administration for human resources, payroll, and procurement functions. Maintaining the ability to function as a small agency with even fewer staff will be a challenge for the Department. Chargebacks for such services will also be administered. The staff will continue to work with Bureau managers to best manage our budget allocations while advancing the Department's mission.

## **Economic Impact: Tourism Works for Wisconsin**

During the 2003-2004 period, travelers spent \$11.78 billion in Wisconsin. This statistic is derived from a comprehensive research study performed annually for Wisconsin by Davidson-Peterson Associates and Chamberlain Research. The 92 percent increase in traveler expenditures between 1995 and 2004 indicates how tourism has grown and the vast contribution this industry makes to Wisconsin's economy. Wisconsin's diverse seasons, attractions, and natural beauty make it one of the top tourist destinations in the Midwest.

## **Tourism Expenditures in Brief**

#### 2004

- ➤ Estimated travel expenditures for the 2004 period totaled \$11.78 billion. This reflects an increase of 0.6% over the 2003 period.
- Travel expenditures generated \$1.36 billion in state revenues and \$556 million in local revenues.
- Travel expenditures generated \$6.65 billion in resident income and supported 309,207 full-time equivalent jobs.

#### 2003

- ➤ Estimated travel expenditures for the 2003 period totaled \$11.71 billion. This reflects an increase of 1.3% over the 2002 period.
- Travel expenditures during this period generated \$1.36 billion in state revenues and \$546 million in local revenues.
- Travel expenditures generated \$6.6 billion in resident income and supported 311,117 full-time equivalent jobs.

These estimates are based on the Davidson-Peterson study data of expenditures made by all people traveling "outside of their normal routine" for business, leisure, meetings and conventions or any combination of those purposes. Travelers include both Wisconsin residents and out-of-state visitors.

For additional economic impact information, contact the Department of Tourism at (608) 261-8187 or visit the Department's tourism industry Web site (agency.travelwisconsin.com).